

**2003 END OF SEASON REPORT
LEADBELT ALLOTMENT**

TERM GRAZING PERMIT				AUTHORIZED USE				ACTUAL USE			
NO.	ON DATE	OFF DATE	H.M.	NO.	ON DATE	OFF DATE	H.M.	NO.	ON DATE	OFF DATE	H.M.
860	7/1	10/15	3025	860	7/1	10/15	3025	860	7/5	9/22*	2369

* The majority of the cattle were off of the allotment by 9/22. There were 19 stragglers that were removed 9/26.

UNIT DATES AND UTILIZATION RESULTS:

ACTUAL GRAZING SCHEDULE			ALLOWABLE STDS	ACTUAL RESULTS
UNIT NAME	ON DATE	OFF DATE	RIPARIAN	RIPARIAN
Horsethief/Deer Creek	7/5	8/4	50% (4 in)	5 inches
Leadbelt	8/5	9/8	50% (4 in)	3 inches
Upper Camp Creek	9/9	9/22	50% (4 in)	No data
Lower Camp Creek**	R E S	T E D	50%(4 in)	4 inches

** Lower Camp was to be rested this year and incidental use took place from unauthorized neighboring allotment cattle. Leadbelt overnigheted here on the way off of the allotment and controlled drift into this unit well this year.

Allotment Inspections: Allotment inspections were conducted on the following dates: 7/29, 8/6, 8/18, 8/19, 8/20, 8/21, 8/28, 9/4, 9/8, 9/15, 9/18, 9/22, 9/23, 10/16, and 10/20. Allotment inspections include, range improvement maintenance checks, cattle location checks and utilization monitoring.

Information: The District experienced below average annual precipitation for the fourth consecutive year. The early part of the growing season was cool. Some isolated rain events in June resulted in substantial grazable forage, however very dry conditions in August and September provided little opportunity for re-growth, with the exception of Horsethief/Deer Creeks due to beaver activity and early use of the unit. The majority of Leadbelt Creek was dry this summer, including the key areas. As the shrubs went dormant, the water began to show back up in places. The Association had a new rider this year, Kurt Huntington. This being his first year on the allotment, Kurt did a great job of riding and was out every time the allotment was visited.

Utilization: Cattle started in Horsethief/Deer Creek this year and stayed there for 35 days. There was heavier use in the Deer Creek drainage as there was a miscommunication between the permittees and the rider and more cattle were put in that drainage than intended. However, this area regrew 2-3 inches by the end of the season. Beaver activity in Deer Creek also increased causing old blown out dams to be repaired and flooding some areas of the creek. Regrowth was also good in Horsethief leaving a 5 inch end of season stubble height.

Toward the end of July the cattle did not want to stay in Horsethief/Deer Creek. Approximately 200 head moved themselves to the Leadbelt unit about 5 days early. These cattle worked the bottom of Leadbelt Creek while the permittees cleaned Horsethief/Deer Creek. The unit was measured on August 19th at a 4" stubble height. Although permittees were advised to move to the next unit, the permittees chose to remain on the unit until 9/8. The permittees did push the cattle out of the bottom on a daily basis, but the cured out feed on the uplands kept the cattle coming back to the bottom for green feed. These factors resulted in the 3" end of season stubble height in the Leadbelt unit.

Camp Creek was used next, and as agreed to, was split into 2 units instead of 1. Upper Camp was grazed last and Lower Camp was to be rested. Both of these units have limited water, making the amount of time spent in the Upper Camp unit short. Lower Camp had incidental use from unauthorized cattle on 2 separate occasions. The permittees did overnight on the unit on their way off of the forest, but this was discussed and authorized. The permittees also extended the fence between the Upper and Lower units and this kept drift between units down considerably compared to past years.

Compliance with Unit Schedule and Project Maintenance: Permittees did a good job of informing Forest Service of cattle movements and put a significant amount of time into maintenance of improvements. The fences between the Leadbelt, Dry Fork and Fish Creek/Trail Creek allotments were fixed to standards and the identified gaps were fenced. This was inspected on 9/23. Three water developments were also rebuilt this year, but are not completed to standard. Permittees efforts to maintain improvements that had been long neglected are appreciated.

Because the boundary fences to the south were not maintained to standard until late in the season, unauthorized use in the Fish Creek Allotment occurred again this year. The issue of "drift" onto the neighbor's allotments is not a new one in this area. A review of the files shows issues of both cattle and sheep crossing allotment boundaries for over 50 years. The involved permittees have been advised numerous times to work out livestock management concerns with each other and to consider drift as an unacceptable thing of the past.

Recommendations: It is essential that existing fences and water developments are up to standard and working before cattle enter a unit. It is vital that allotment boundaries be respected. Upland water sources are critical for good cattle distribution on this allotment. Permittees must inform Forest Service personnel of needs they may have in terms of material for maintenance of existing improvements. We would be glad to provide them as

funding allows. The three water developments maintained last year must be completed to standard including fencing around the spring source.

As end of season utilization standards were exceeded this season on the Leadbelt unit, it adds to existing evidence that there is a serious stocking rate problem on the Leadbelt allotment. Permittees, for some time, have had a reduced season of use and/or number of cattle. It is critical that the range be stocked properly, and when standards are met, cattle be moved to the next unit or home. A decision was made on April 9, 2003 to reduce the Leadbelt Allotment by 28% in time resulting in a new off date of 9/15. This decision will be implemented this spring when the permittees are reissued Term Grazing Permits reflecting this change. When a proper stocking rate is attained, the problems associated with exceeding standards and unauthorized use should decrease.